Israel High Court Rejects Lansky's Citizenship Bid

JERUSALEM, Sept. 11 (AP) — Israel's Supreme Court ruled today that Meyer Lansky, the American gambling figure, had close links with U.S. underworld leaders and organized crime, and turned down his appeal for citizenship.

The court noted that American-style organized crime had not yet hit Israel, but said that if the 71-year-old Lansky were allowed to stay, "there is reasonable cause to fear that . . . . he will be a danger to public safety."

No immediate move was made to deport the reputed financial wizard of the American underworld, and there was no indication that Israel would send him back to the United States where he has been indited on gambling charges by two grand juries.

A government spokesman said Lansky, "is expected to act in accordance with the Supreme Court decision" — meaning Lansky should leave the country in which he sought refuge more than two years ago.

MEYER LANSKY
. . . facing deportation

The Interior Ministry said it was offering Lansky, whose American passport has been canceled except for travel to the United States, an Israeli travel document to go to any country which would accept him.

Lansky refused to talk about his plans and was whisked away by his lawyers to a nearby hotel.

Lansky claimed Israeli citizenship because he is a Jew and the "law or return" offers citizenship to all Jews who come to the Jewish homeland. The Interior Ministry had denied his application on the grounds that he had a criminal past and would endanger the public welfare.

Lansky's lawyer contended that the government's claim of a criminal past was based an "rumor and gossip," and that he had no record of criminal conviction.

[In Washington, a Justice Department spokesman said that Lansky is under indictment in Las Vegas for allegedly concealing income from the Flamingo Hotel there, and in Miami for contempt of court and for conspiring to evade federal income taxes.

[None of the offenses are covered in U.S. extradition treaties, the spokesman added, so there is no way that federal authorities can arrest Lansky unless he sets foot on the soil of the United States or its possessions.]